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STATE OF MICHIGAN LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH

DAVID C. HOLLISTER, DIRECTOR

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NIDA R.SAMONA

CHAIRPERSON

Greetings to all Michigan Educators, Parents and Students ~

My name is Nida Samona and I am the Chairperson of the Michigan Liquor Control Commission. I have been reading some wonderful materials about safety during the spring events of proms and graduation. I would like to share those with you today and encourage you to put these materials to use!

Sadly, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (www.nhtsa.dot.gov/) reported 490 alcoholrelated traffic fatalities in Michigan in 2002, 80 of those deaths were people under the age of 21. They also reported an average of eight alcohol related fatalities among youth under the age of 21 each day across the United States. These numbers bring great sadness to many families and friends who are witness to the death or injury of one of these young people. Awareness and discussion with parents about the issue are two key ways that we can work to eliminate these numbers.

Please visit the web site of The Century Council today (www.centurycouncil.org). This site offers pamphlets, CDs, posters, discussion guides, statistics and other user-friendly materials. My two personal favorites are the "Prom night tips for parents" and the Brandon Silveria story – at age 17, Brandon had a few drinks with friends at a high school party and later was involved in a near fatal car crash. Brandon was in a coma for nearly three months and then endured another three years of rehabilitation. He still has visible speech and walking impairments but he uses his experience to talk to young people about the dangers of underage drinking. His speeches are positively magical and it is surprisingly easy to communicate via the Century Council's web site to request a videotape of his story and/or request that he speak at your school. Lets work together to encourage our young people and each other to stay safe this year.

Sincerely,

Nida R. Samona.

Michigan Liquor Control Commission Chairperson